No. 61.

NATAL.

Sir C. B. H. MITCHELL to the MARQUESS OF RIPON.

Government House, Pietermaritzburg,
MY LORD, Natal, October 8, 1892.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship, herewith, the Blue Book of this Colony for the year 1891–2, together with a Report upon it which has been drawn up by the Assistant Colonial Secretary.

I have, &c.
(Signed) C. B. H. MITCHELL.

The Right Hon. the Secretary of State,
&c. &c. &c.

NATAL.

REPORT ON THE BLUE BOOK FOR THE YEAR 1891–2 (ending 30th June, 1892).

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE.

1. The total actual revenue for the year 1891–2 was 1,392,455*l.* as compared with 1,318,769*l.* for the preceding twelve months, thus showing a net increase of 73,686*l.*

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2. The following formed the principal sources of revenue:—

Heads of Revenue.	Receipts for		Increase.	Decrease.
	1891-2.	1890-1.		
	£	£	£	£
Railways - - -	665,336	660,167	5,169	—
Customs - - -	301,180	273,915	27,265	—
Native Hut Tax - -	80,378	77,075	3,303	—
Land Sales - - -	46,499	44,216	2,283	—
Mail Service - - -	48,465	41,338	7,127	—
Interest - - -	24,655	12,143	12,512	—
Stamps - - - -	24,012	24,774	—	763
Fines and fees of court -	21,794	18,196	3,598	—
Wharf Dues - - -	21,983	19,941	2,042	—
Port and Harbour Dues -	16,433	13,824	2,609	—
Telegraphs - - -	14,946	15,446	—	500
Transfer Dues - - -	12,445	16,214	—	3,769
Dog Tax - - -	11,005	10,397	608	—

Under three only of the foregoing heads has there been a falling off as compared with the previous year.

3. The ordinary expenditure for the year was 1,280,965*l.* as compared with 1,393,896*l.* for 1890-1, a reduction of 112,931*l.*

4. The largest items of expenditure were the following:—

	£
Railway traffic payments - - -	489,253
Interest on public debt - - -	294,192
Establishments—salaries - - -	161,037

A saving of 130,525*l.* was effected in the working of the Railway Department as compared with the expenditure of the previous year under this head.

5. Expenditure under Loan Funds during the year was as follows:—

	£
Public works - - - -	168,130
Harbour works - - - -	132,500
Railway extension - - -	443,687
Expenses connected with raising Loans	20
Total - - -	£744,337

6. The Public Debt of the Colony on the 30th June, 1892, was 7,170,354*l.* Further borrowing to the extent of 890,000*l.* is authorised by Law 29, 1890; but as yet this balance of loan has not been placed in the market.

TRADE AND SHIPPING.

Imports.

7. The value of goods imported into Natal by sea during the year ended 30th June, 1892, was 3,690,734*l.* as against 3,620,809*l.* for the previous twelve months—an increase in round figures of 70,000*l.*

8. The chief articles imported were the following, the values being shown for two years:—

Imports.	1891–2.	1890–1.
	£	£
Agricultural implements	21,948	20,865
Ale and beer	49,802	52,245
Apparel and slops	359,984	269,294
Apothecary ware	136,639	70,520
Bags, empty	41,602	13,846
Cabinet and upholstery ware	61,906	56,410
Coffee	101,394	104,187
Cottons, manufactured	79,485	61,761
Blankets and sheets	27,407	20,425
Flour, meal, and bran	167,165	106,010
Glass and glassware	26,796	24,463
Haberdashery and millinery	308,757	270,726
Hosiery	28,810	22,096
Iron of all sorts	182,439	167,172
Ironmongery	208,659	182,080
Leather, manufactured	152,538	142,881
Machinery	126,492	87,189
Oilman's stores	103,426	106,316
Oils of all kinds	65,471	36,131
Preserved provisions and fruits, &c.	72,281	67,084
Plate and jewellery	19,182	17,753
Rice	65,128	55,200
Saddlery and harness	23,036	40,690
Soap	27,987	22,767
Spirits of all kinds	104,196	76,472
Stationery	47,811	36,376
Tea	11,359	15,865
Turnery and fancy ware	29,186	36,832
Woollen manufactures	18,492	18,580
„ Blankets and Rugs	77,920	92,933
Wine in bottle	15,940	12,204

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The increased use of tea grown in Natal, and the establishment of a Natal brewery have caused a diminution in the Imports of tea, and ale and beer.

9. The trade with the United Kingdom showed a slight falling off as compared with the preceding year, as appears from the following figures :—

	1891–2.	1890–1.
	£	£
Imports from United Kingdom - -	2,836,218	2,885,571
„ „ the Colonies and India - -	391,931	290,009
„ „ Foreign Countries - -	462,585	445,229
Total Imports -	3,690,734	3,620,809

10. The Customs Revenue for the year, as already stated, was 301,180*l.* as against 273,915*l.* for 1890–1.

Exports.

11. The total value of Exports was as follows :—

	1891–2.	1890–1.
	£	£
Exported by sea - - - -	1,184,118	1,218,413
„ overland in transit - - -	192,967	97,212*
Total -	1,377,085	1,315,625

* No record of values of goods in transit was kept prior to 1st January, 1891.

12. The following is a comparison for 1891–2 and 1890–1 of the values of the principal articles exported by sea :—

Articles.	1891–2.	1890–1.
	£	£
Wool - - - - - -	612,604	735,067
Raw gold - - - - -	218,683	173,283
Sugar, unrefined - - - -	67,402	14,057

Articles.	1891–2.	1890–1.
	£	£
Coal	49,275	21,599
Hides, ox and cow	40,629	47,456
Skins, calf, sheep, and goat	27,152	13,372
Hair Angora	15,279	18,158
Horns, ox or cow	2,630	2,103
Maize	14,501	9,908
Bark (wattle)	9,243	5,588
Ores—Lead	8,225	1,627
Quartz	5,216	1,574
Silver	3,099	7,541
Iron	1,305	—
Spirits, rum	4,367	3,927
Flour, meal, bran	2,401	4,051
Fruit, fresh	2,175	1,210
Tea	1,932	419

The falling off in the value of wool exported is accounted for to some extent by the fact that farmers have been storing their wool in preference to selling at the low rates which have ruled of late; there has evidently also been some diversion of wool to other ports. The increase in the exports of coal, bark, tea, and fresh fruit are indicative of the progress of comparatively new industries.

13. The increase of goods exported to Inland States in transit is marked. By the term "in transit" is meant that certain classes of goods are allowed to be imported and sent beyond the borders of the colony under bond, a low rate of Customs duty being charged in lieu of the rate under the ordinary tariff of the Colony. The transit trade forms, of course, a portion only of the commerce with the adjacent territories. The transit trade for 1891–2 was apportioned as follows:—

	£
South African Republic	172,071
Orange Free State	14,250
Griqualand East	2,114
Pondoland	4,488
Swaziland	44
	£192,967

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SHIPPING.

14. The following is a summary of the shipping that entered inwards at Port Natal during 1891–2 as compared with the twelve months immediately preceding:—

Year.	Sailing ships.		Steam ships.		Total.	
	No.	Tons.	No.	Tons.	No.	Tons.
1891-2 - -	135	55,452	408	509,972	543	565,424
1890-1 - -	137	48,134	357	450,176	494	498,310
Increase - -	—	7,318	51	59,796	49	67,114
Decrease - -	2	—	—	—	—	—

RAILWAYS AND PUBLIC WORKS.

Railways.

15. The number of miles of railway open in Natal for traffic on the 30th June, 1892, was 375½. The opening of Laings Nek Tunnel on the 14th October, 1891, completed the final section of the main line from the port to the border of the South African Republic at Charlestown. The railway line from Ladysmith to the border of the Orange Free State at Van Reenen's Pass, a length of 36 miles, was opened for passenger traffic on the 19th November, 1891, and the extension (23½ miles) of the line to Harrismith in the Orange Free State, carried out by the Natal Government under a Convention with the Government of that State, was completed by the end of June, 1892, the opening of the section for general traffic taking place on the 13th of July. The survey of a line from Harrismith to a point of junction on the Orange Free State line between the Sand and Valsch Rivers was completed during the year.

Public Works.

16. The most important undertakings completed during the year by the Public Works Department includes two lighthouses for the Aliwal Shoal, a bridge over the Umzimkula at Hancock's Drift, a bridge over the Umgeni at McArthur's Drift, and works for water supply at Charlestown. Extensive additions to the Durban hospital were also in progress.

Harbour Works.

17. The south breakwater has reached a total length of 2,585 feet and the north pier a length of about 3,700 feet; the breakwater overlaps the north pier by about 900 feet, and extension of both these works was suspended during the year, it being desirable that before proceeding with further extensions the effect

of the piers as they now stand should be carefully watched. Dredging operations have been carried on by five dredgers of both the bucket and the suction type, and much improvement has been effected as regards navigation.

18. The wharfage at the port now reaches a total length of 2,640 feet, and facility for future wharf extension is afforded by the considerable area of land reclaimed. A wharf shed of 400 feet in length by 100 feet in breadth has recently been added to the former shed accommodation. The electric lighting of the port has been found of much convenience, and some increase of that lighting is contemplated.

19. The average depth of water on the Bar at low water of ordinary spring tides for the last ten years was as follows:—

Year.	ft. in.
1882	6 1
1883	6 1½
1884	7 2
1885	8 4
1886	8 3¾
1887	10 7
1888	11 6¾
1889	11 4½
1890	10 1
1891	10 9
1892 (1st six months only)	13 8

This improvement of depth bears witness to the value of the works carried out for the improvement of the entrance to the harbour. Large vessels are now able to come inside, as will be seen from the following return of the largest vessels which have recently crossed the Bar inward at Port Natal:—

Year.	Ship.	Gross Tonnage.	Length.	Draught on entering.
			ft. in.	ft. in.
1890	Congella	1,585	255 0	16 3
"	Clan Forbes	2,441	324 5	14 10
"	Clan Cameron	2,433	324 5	14 5
1891	Clan Macdonald	2,642	335 5	16 0
"	Serica	2,652	321 5	16 10
"	Tasso	2,994	320 3	14 6
"	Ifafa	1,751	270 2	17 0
"	Umono	2,031	281 5	18 0
1892 (first six months)	Dunrobin Castle	2,783	342 3	17 8
	Lucina	2,610	297 0	19 9
	Strathesk	2,271	290 9	19 4

MINES.

20. Of the mineral products of the Colony, coal must be regarded as the most important. The coal fields are connected by railway with the port, and comprise seams of good thickness extending over a large area, the quality of the coal comparing favourably with the best imported English and Welsh coals. During the 12 months under report 120,000 tons were raised, one half of which was exported. The market for Natal coal is rapidly increasing, and with the view of meeting the increased demand several new collieries are commencing work. Natal's coal industry is a valuable one, and bids fair to prove a leading factor in the future welfare of the Colony.

21. Gold is still being mined in the Umsinga and Umzinto Districts in small but appreciable quantity. Further capital is, however, needed for the proper development and working of the gold deposits in these localities.

22. The value of the iron ore so abundantly found in the upper districts of the Colony has been proved, and is beginning to attract attention. There is some reason to believe that before long, iron and steel works will be established in the Newcastle Division, in proximity to the railway and the coal mines.

AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRIES.

23. The year under report has been a fairly prosperous one for stock farmers, and good prices have been generally realized. Sheep farming is increasing, but the abnormally low price of wool has had a depressing effect. According to the returns the yield of sugar for the year was very good, and a large increase upon that for the preceding year. A large proportion of the sugar manufactured is consumed in the Colony or sent across the inland borders. In addition to this, the export by sea for 1891–2 was 111,705 cwts. as against 21,962 cwts. for 1890–1; 251,940 proof gallons of rum were distilled as compared with 153,360 gallons in 1890–1. Tea continues to be largely grown in the coast districts, chiefly in Victoria county and the Lower Umzimkulu Division. The area under cultivation may be put down at about 2,200 acres. The crop for the past season was about 350,000 lbs., and that for the ensuing season is expected to reach 500,000 lbs. The quantity of tea exported by sea during the year was 43,633 lbs. Coffee cultivation is successfully carried on in the coast districts, though not to a large extent. Coffee does not figure conspicuously among the Colony's exports, the local demand being greater than the supply. The planting of trees is extending, and attention is being more particularly given to the cultivation of the acacia mollissima, the bark of which is a valuable tanning product.

24. Concurrently with the progress of the Colony in other directions may be noticed the advances which have been made in the promotion of certain industries which have for their

object the turning to account of some of the chief natural products of the country. Manufactories for the production of leather and of woollen materials have been established, and are working with success. Other manufactures, such as those of lime, cement, and hemp deserve some notice.

IMMIGRATION.

25. The number of Indian immigrants brought into Natal during the year was 3,183; these Indians compare very favourably in physique and general health with those introduced in previous years. During the same period 774 Indians returned to India, taking with them savings in cash and jewellery amounting to 13,387*l.*

26. The work of the European Immigration Department has been confined to the introduction of nominated immigrants by assisted passages, the number so introduced during the year being 581 souls, and to the general supervision of existing agricultural settlements which continue to prosper fairly well. Further work is being deferred pending the report of a Commission appointed by the Governor to consider the whole question of European immigration.

POPULATION.

27. The statistics given below are from the census, taken on the 5th April, 1891, except in the case of the native population which is from an approximate return, prepared at the time of the census, and based upon the total number of huts in the Colony after an enumeration of the inmates of a certain number of huts in each division :—

——	Males.	Females.	Total.
Persons of all nationalities exclusive of Indians and Natives - - -	25,787	21,001	46,788
Indians not under indenture - -	18,340	12,053	30,393
Indians under indenture - -	7,346	3,403	10,749
Natives - - - - -	216,589	239,394	455,983
Total - -	268,062	275,851	543,913

The figures given in the Blue Book show a small increase in the total population (about 12,000), the returns having been prepared to the 30th June last.

(Signed) C. BIRD,
Assistant Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Natal,
October 10, 1892.

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